

[1 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

Rank in global hunger index

351. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that India ranked an abysmal 93 in a group of 119 developing countries on the Global Hunger Index 2006 and that more than 35 per cent of our population, i.e. over 350 million, is food insecure, consuming less than 80 per cent of the minimum energy requirement;

(b) if so, the steps Government are taking to address this gigantic problem and whether the State Governments have been taken into confidence and consensus arrived towards finding a workable solution; and

(c) whether the NGOs and other philanthropic bodies are being involved to use their expertise and utilize their trained volunteers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the Report of the International Food Policy Research Institute, entitled "The Challenge of Hunger-Global Hunger Index: Facts, determinants and trends", India ranks 93 out of 119 developing countries on the latest Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2006. GHI is comprised of equally weighted indicators of (a) the proportion of people who are food energy deficient as estimated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, (b) the prevalence of underweight in children under the age of five as compiled by the World Health Organisation, and (c) the under-five mortality rate as reported by UNICEF. It does not define specifically food insecurity. However, as per the information available from National Sample Survey data on consumption expenditure of the 55th Round, 0.7% of the rural households were not getting enough food everyday in all months of the year and 2.6% were not getting enough food for some months of the year during 1999-2000. The corresponding ratios for urban areas were 0.3% and 0.6% respectively.

(b) The Government is implementing a number of anti-poverty programmes, such as wage employment and asset generation programmes to raise the income of poor, in addition to the income generated from the general growth process. Besides, there are a number

of food and nutrition related programmes such as Integrated Child Development Services, Mid-day Meal Scheme, Food for Work Programme, Targeted Public Distribution System etc., which improve the nutrition status of population. These programmes are being implemented in collaboration with the State Governments.

(c) A number of NGOs are working in the area of food security, nutrition and livelihood issues. NGOs were consulted before finalizing the Approach Paper to the Eleventh Five Year Plan and they are also nominated in the various Working Groups and Steering Committee set up for the Eleventh Plan.

Regional imbalance in States

352. Sri Sri SURENDRA LATH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had conducted any study to find regional imbalances in respect of Orissa and other States;

(b) whether it is a fact that despite several central plans and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, regional imbalances in several districts of Orissa did not change;

(c) if so, whether Government have any plan to enhance the allocation of funds in Central plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes for backward districts of the State; and

(d) whether Government have evaluated the Revised Long Term Action Plan (RLTAP) in Orissa and if so, the findings thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) No, Sir. The planning and development of an area and allocation of funds within a State are primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned.

(b) The Union Government, on its part, supplements the efforts of the State Governments through weightage in the formula use of distribution of Central assistance, Special Area Programmes and various poverty alleviation and other Centrally Sponsored Schemes. However, despite various efforts made through the Five Year Plans to address the problems relating to regional imbalances, imbalances in regional development in